

VI. REMARKS

The drawings are objected to because none of the drawing figures, particularly Figure 7, illustrates reference numeral "33" as described on line 25 of page 23. Rather than providing a replacement sheet of drawing, the specification is amended on Page 23, Paragraph 1, by deleting "33". Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

The Abstract of the Disclosure is objected to because of the use of a legal term, namely "means". The abstract is amended to overcome this objection. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

The disclosure is objected to because of informalities. The specification is amended as indicated above to overcome the objection. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3, 7, 8, 11, 13 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over Yanagihara et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,826,427) in view of Kato et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,134,883) and Okada et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,330,880). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Yanagihara discloses a compression ignition type engine having an exhaust passage that includes an NOx absorbent and air-fuel ratio control means. The NOx absorbent is arranged in the exhaust passage. The NOx absorbent absorbs NOx when an air-fuel ratio of exhaust gas flowing into the NOx absorbent is lean and releases the absorbed NOx when the air-fuel ratio of exhaust gas is either a rich air-fuel ratio or a stoichiometric air-fuel ratio. The air-fuel ratio control means normally maintains the mean value of the air-fuel ratio in a combustion chamber of the engine at a lean air-fuel ratio and changes over the mean value of the air-fuel ratio from a lean air-fuel ratio to either the rich air-fuel ratio or the stoichiometric air-fuel ratio when NOx should be released from the NOx absorbent. A fuel containing oxygen therein is used at least when the mean value of air-fuel ratio is made as the rich air-fuel ratio or the stoichiometric air-fuel ratio.

Kato teaches a method for detecting deterioration of a catalyst for reducing nitrogen oxide. The method is usable for an exhaust gas system of an internal combustion engine that operates mainly under a lean condition. The system includes a nitrogen oxide reducing catalyst capable of adsorbing nitrogen oxide under lean atmosphere and nitrogen oxide sensor disposed downstream of the nitrogen oxide reducing catalyst. The method includes the steps of switching temporarily the operation condition of the internal combustion engine into a stoichiometric condition or a rich condition so that the nitrogen oxide adsorbed to the nitrogen oxide reducing catalyst is detached or decomposed when an output of the nitrogen oxide sensor reaches a predetermined level and returning the operational condition back to a lean condition when an electromotive force or a pumping current of a first pumping cell of the nitrogen oxide sensor reaches a predetermined level. The deterioration of the catalyst is detected based on an NOx exhaust amount (g/mile) that is calculated from at least nitrogen oxide sensor output, exhaust gas flow amount and a running distance of vehicle.

Okada discloses an exhaust gas recirculation system that includes a recirculation system main body, a movable member, a movable space, a first recirculation hole, or second and third recirculation holes and two valve seats. The recirculation system main body is disposed in a recirculation path for exhaust gas. The movable member has two closure valves. The movable space includes an area formed inside the recirculation system main body in which the movable member is movably disposed. The first recirculation hole is formed to communicate with a central portion of the movable space through an outer face of the recirculation system main body. The second and third recirculation holes are formed to communicate with both ends of the movable space through another outer face of the recirculation system main body than in the case of the first recirculation hole. Each of the two valve seats is in abutment with each of the closure valves when the movable member is located at a preset position in the movable space and communicates between the central portion and both end portions of the movable space. A first movable space opening formed by the

communication of the first recirculation hole with the movable space is formed outside the movable range of the closure valves in the movable space.

Claims 1 and 7, as amended, are each directed to an exhaust gas deNOx apparatus for an engine that includes at least one exhaust gas recirculating circuit for mixing the exhaust gas into intake air and a plurality of recirculating circuit adjusting valves being arranged in parallel with the at least one exhaust gas recirculating circuit and operative to independently open and close each one of the adjusting valves.

It is respectfully submitted that that none of the applied art, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests the features of claims 1 and 7 as amended. Specifically, it is respectfully submitted that none of the applied art, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests at least one exhaust gas recirculating circuit for mixing the exhaust gas into intake air and a plurality of recirculating circuit adjusting valves being arranged in parallel with the at least one exhaust gas recirculating circuit and operative to independently open and close each one of the adjusting valves. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that one of ordinary skill in the art would not be motivated to combine the features of the applied art because such combination would not result in the claimed invention. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1 and 7 are allowable over the applied art.

Claim 2 depends from claim 1 and includes all of the features of claim 1. Claims 3, 11 and 14 depend from claims 1 or 2 and include all of the features of claims 1 or 2. Claims 8 and 13 depend from claim 7 and includes all of the features of claim 7. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the dependent claims are allowable at least for the reasons the claims from which they depend are allowable as well as for the features they recite.

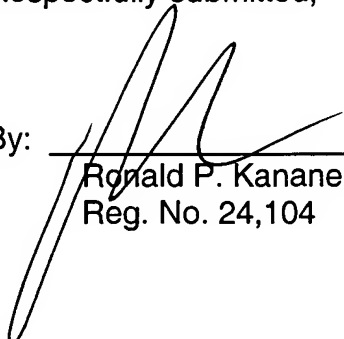
In view of the foregoing, reconsideration of the application and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested. Should the Examiner believe anything further is desirable in order to place the application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' representative at the telephone number listed below.

Should additional fees be necessary in connection with the filing of this paper or if a Petition for Extension of Time is required for timely acceptance of the same, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 18-0013 for any such fees and Applicant(s) hereby petition for such extension of time.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosure(s): Amendment Transmittal

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